

INHERITANCE

I leave to you a certainty
that boundary lines mark ill from good
and flags reveal a right from wrong;
I send to you assuring sense
of life secure from poverty
and aching pleas of sorrow's song;
Bequeath to you becalming boon
of saving freedom to renounce
sun-searching thoughts that all defame;
And more the sanction to insure
protection on what paths you choose
for winning all which is your claim:
And also yours the right to live
in chosen order undefiled
by cries of men clothed in despair;
As final gift I leave you ease—
a world where mournful winds are stilled
storm-freeing you in deadened air.
These all I leave to you, my son—

Forgive me

—KARL GWIASDA

What is Beauty?

Paul K. Davis

BEAUTY is the goal of man's creativity. There are many kinds of beauty; each artist creates in his own style. There is the beauty of an elegant explanation of observations, the beauty of an efficient government improving the life of its subjects; there is beauty in a religion which removes the uncertainty and fear from life and in a philosophy which breaks the bonds of narrow prejudices; there is also the beauty of music, painting, and architecture.

Most people would admit that there is beauty in painting, poetry, music, architecture, drama and dance and that their pursuit is specifically for the sake of beauty, but few recognize that in most of man's activities there is an element, large or small, of the desire to create beauty.

Religion is devised to lead men to a more beautiful life. This has been true throughout history and is true throughout the world. A witch-doctor chants his spells to drive away sickness or to bring rain for crops to grow. Elijah, seeing Israel in ugly subservience to Baal, demonstrated the folly of worshipping that idol by calling down fire from him of whom it was written, "How beautiful are thy dwelling places, O Lord of hosts!" Jesus advised his followers to love one another as part of his leading them to a more beautiful life;

"I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." The goal of the Communist movement is a world state in which everyone would live a better and more ideal life under the guidance of the Communist party and theories.

The scientist regards as beautiful the most perfect descriptions and explanations of the phenomena of the physical world. A scientific theory is as much a work of art as Bach's *Magnificat* or the church of Santa Sophia. James Clerk Maxwell set down four symmetrically related equations; from these he could derive all known laws of electric and magnetic fields and optics as well as predict a wealth of new waves including radio waves and x-rays of such importance to our modern world. Sir Isaac Newton discovered one law of gravity which explained why apples fall, how the moon can circle the earth, why the earth is round and how people on the other side avoid falling off. Albert Einstein, disturbed by an experiment contradicting the theory of the ether and also by a discrepancy between Maxwell's equations and Galileo's concepts of motion, created his special theory of relativity which explained not only these difficulties but also a peculiarity of the orbit of the planet Mercury and made predictions not all of which have yet been tested, including the famous mass-energy relation which has led to atomic power. These are but a few of the specimens of beauty from just one of the sciences.

Beauty offers a common explanation for the many varied pursuits of man, but this is only one of the two sides of a coin. On the other side is the inscription, "What is the criterion of beauty?" What style should the musician think most beautiful? Which religion is best of all the the faiths theologians and mystics have followed? Is the scientist's theory to be accepted or should he produce more complicated equations? Is it better for the statesman to negotiate or invade? We inquire whether there is not an absolute criterion for answering these questions.

The scientist can submit his theories to the test of experiment as can the statesman. If a theory does not hold true in practice, it is not true. This test, however, begins to break down for the theologian who can indeed see whether those who hold his dogmas lead a better life, but who cannot see whether upon death their souls are given access to any paradise. A statesman, too, even though he watches carefully the effects of his laws and decrees still has no proof of whether the results are in fact desirable. The musician or poet can gain nothing from any objective experiment to indicate the beauty of his composition. In fact even the scientist, for whom experiment is most valuable, often devises valid theories without experimental proof of all predictions and after he has found a law he may still ask, "Would not nature's rules be more beautiful if this law were replaced by another?" In our ability to compare our creations with the real world we therefore have an absolute criterion which can go half, but only half, of the way to beauty. But what of

that other half?

Mendeleyev knew from the experiments of others of an assortment of chemical elements of various atomic masses, some with similar and some with varying chemical properties; where did the idea come from that they could be arranged in a table in order of increasing mass with elements of similar chemistry falling into columns? Mozart had a certain set of instruments capable of playing a certain set of notes; how was it that these became organized into the Jupiter symphony? Oedipus, king of Thebes, unwittingly killed his father, married his mother and blinded himself when he discovered these deeds; how were these facts transformed into Sophocles' powerful drama of a man in the grip of fate?

The world around the artist leads him half of the way to beauty, but for the other half of the distance he must guide himself. Religion is dead if it does not express the devotion of the believer. Music is empty if it does not convey the feelings of the composer. Scientific concept is probably useless if it does not come from the scientist's best understanding of observation. It is of the essence of beauty not only that it agrees with the facts of the world we live in but that it also comes from the soul of the artist himself; thus half of the criterion for beauty has no objective answer.

The creation of beauty is the task of man's activity; beauty conforms to the facts of the real world, and yet beauty is personal.

Heaven in Moderation

Clarice Noland

"HELL IS full of good meanings and wishings," states George Herbert. William James expresses the thought in other words—"With mere good intentions, hell is proverbially paved." In his short story "A Country Doctor" Franz Kafka's main theme deals with the ineffectualness of a doctor's good intentions because they are selfish and because the doctor unconsciously delights in his self-appointed role of the righteous martyr. The theme of the story concerns the alienation and frustrations of man in seeking to help others, and Kafka presents the idea that one often does alienate the very person one is trying to help. But do people want help? No, according to Anton Chekhov. Most people want illusions; they fear the truth. If one does not or cannot face truth, one is forced to create a framework which will not only shield one from the truth, but also allow one to fabricate new ideas and new ideals which will replace the dreaded truth. To achieve this Utopian state one must crawl back inside himself so that he is no longer bound to the outside world; he must sever all connections with it. As time passes and one is more and more embittered, one finds more and more pleasure in his fanciful heaven where he is God, the Almighty. Perhaps this individual did not mean to replace God; perhaps in the beginning or even now he would be horrified at the